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## ADA Statement on New Study in The Journal of the American Medical Association

American Dental Association

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**ADA Statement on New Study in The Journal of the American Medical Association**

**CHICAGO, May 25, 2019** — The American Dental Association (ADA) is aware of recently published research in The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) that examines opioid prescriptions written by dentists in the U.S. and England in 2016. The ADA continues to be dedicated to raising awareness and taking action on the opioid public health crisis.

Since 2011, the ADA has advocated to keep opioid pain relievers from harming dental patients and their families and worked to raise professional awareness on medication alternatives to opioids. A growing body of research supports ADA policy that dentists should consider prescribing non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) alone or in combination with acetaminophen over opioids as first-line therapy for acute pain management.

To combat opioid abuse, the ADA has urged all 163,000 member dentists to double down on their efforts to prevent opioids from harming patients and their families.

Dentists have written nearly half a million fewer opioid prescriptions over a five-year period, from 18.5 million in 2012 to 18.1 million in 2017. In March 2018, the ADA adopted [policy](#) related to opioid prescribing by dentists for acute pain that supports:

- Mandatory continuing education regarding prescription of opioids and other controlled substances.
- Statutory limits on opioid dosage and duration of no more than seven days for the treatment of acute pain, consistent with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention evidence-based guidelines.
- Dentists registering with and utilizing Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs (PDMPs) to promote the appropriate use of opioids and deter misuse and abuse.

In April 2018, researchers from the ADA Science Institute, Case Western University and the University of Pittsburgh published a scientific review of studies in the [Journal of the American Dental Association](#) which concluded that NSAIDs alone or in combination with acetaminophen are generally more effective and are associated with fewer side effects compared to opioids. The findings support the [ADA's 2016 policy statement](#) that dentists should "consider NSAIDs as the first-line therapy for acute pain management."

The ADA has also developed [patient-friendly resources](#) to inform the public that over-the-counter medication can often effectively relieve short-term dental pain.

Working together with physicians, pharmacies, policymakers and the public, the ADA believes it is possible to end this tragic and preventable public health crisis that has been devastating our families and communities.

Learn more at [ADA.org/opioids](https://ada.org/opioids) and [MouthHealthy.org/opioids](https://mouthhealthy.org/opioids).

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#### **About the American Dental Association**

The not-for-profit ADA is the nation's largest dental association, representing more than 161,000 dentist members. The premier source of oral health information, the ADA has advocated for the public's health and promoted the art and science of dentistry since 1859. The ADA's state-of-the-art research facilities develop and test dental products and materials that have advanced the practice of dentistry and made the patient experience more positive. The ADA Seal of Acceptance long has been a valuable and respected guide to consumer dental care products. The monthly *The Journal of the American Dental Association* (JADA) is the ADA's flagship publication and the best-read scientific journal in dentistry. For more information about the ADA, visit [ADA.org](https://ada.org). For more information on oral health, including prevention, care and treatment of dental disease, visit the ADA's consumer website [MouthHealthy.org](https://mouthhealthy.org).